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ABSTRACT

This volume, second of two, presents results of the formative evaluation of 14 Head Start programs that received grants for the purpose of demonstrating a variety of approaches to improving transition between Head Start programs and elementary schools. The evaluation was designed to obtain data on project implementation, successes, and obstacles. Ten grantee programs, which varied in geographic location, were surveyed by mail or through personal interviews; five which varied in program approach, geographic distribution, and auspices were selected for site visits. Respondents at the 14 cooperating sites included Head Start directors, program component coordinators, Head Start teachers, school district officials, school principals, school teachers, and former Head Start parents whose children were currently in kindergarten. Project proposals, which were used to develop descriptions of the transition programs, depicted transition activities unique to each project. Section 1 of the report provides the narrative descriptions of the 15 original programs (one site did not respond). Section 2 provides a quantitative analysis of the data that focuses on activities commonly conducted by grantees. Many programs cited the striking discontinuity that exists between Head Start and elementary school approaches to early childhood education. To deal with such discontinuity, the transition grantees developed a variety of activities, agreements, and approaches. Thirty tables are provided. (RH)

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FINAL REPORT

FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF 15 HEAD START TO PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSITION GRANTEES

Volume II

November, 1987

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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Methdology	2
Site Visit Sample	4
Mail Survey Sample	5
Narrative Description of 15 Transition Grantees	7
Integrative Analysis of Transition Grantees	37
Complete Sample Description	37
Head Start Perspective - Directors and Component Coordinators Reports	37
Transition Activities	37
Transmittal of Records	39
Staff Involvement in Transition	43
Staff Concerns About Transition	43
Activities for Children	46
Problems Encountered in Transition	46
Critical Incidents	50
School Staff Perspectives	55
Principals	55
School Teachers	62
Head Start Teachers	71
Head Start Parents	79
Summary	88

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1	Evaluation Response Rate by Type of Respondent	3
Table 2	Activities Performed by Transition Grantees	40
Table 3	Number of Programs Providing Information to Schools By Percentage of Children For Which Item is Provided	42
Table 4	Head Start Staff Involvement in Transition Activities	44
Table 5	Staff Concerns About Transition of Children Into School	45
Table 6	Transition Activities for Parents	47
Table 7	Methods Used To Provide Information on Transition Efforts to Parents	48
Table 8	Activities to Prepare Children For Transition	49
Table 9	Problems Programs Encountered in Transition Project	51
Table 10	Situations Described As Barriers to Effective Transition	53
Table 11	Situations Described As Examples of Effective Transition	54
Table 12	Principals' Reports on Receipt of Child Information from Head Start	56
Table 13	Use of Information Received From Head Start	58
Table 14	School Participation in Coordination Activities With Head Start	59
Table 15	Problems Schools Encountered in Transition	61
Table 16	Teachers' Participation in Transition Activities	64
Table 17	Information Received from Head Start Regarding Children	65
Table 18	Teachers' Use of Information Received from Head Start	67
Table 19	Number of Parents With Whom Teachers Spoke About Various Topics During First Month of School	68
Table 20	School Teachers' Comparison of Head Start Children to Other Low Income Children In a Variety of Abilities	69

List of Tables
(Continued)

Table 21	Teachers' Reports on Biggest Problems in Transition	70
Table 22	Head Start Teachers' Coordination Activities Between Head Start and the Schools	74
Table 23	Activities to Prepare Children For School	75
Table 24	Activities for Parents to Help Them Prepare Children For School	76
Table 25	Teacher Concerns About Child Transition to School	77
Table 26	Problems in Transition	78
Table 27	Activities Head Start Programs Offered Parents	81
Table 28	Parent Ratings of Head Start Performance on Transition	83
Table 29	Parental Concerns About School Entry	84
Table 30	Parents' Ratings of Child Self-Confidence, Liking of School and Happiness At Three Time Points	87

Introduction

In 1985 through the Coordinated Discretionary Grant program, the Administration for Children, Youth and Families solicited grant proposals from Head Start programs, public schools or PTAs to demonstrate locally-designed ways to reduce the stress of transition and help children succeed in school. Applicants were requested to address the following issues in their proposals:

- Involving parents actively in planning, carrying out and assessing the transition activities.
- Increasing first-hand contact between the two systems, including the year before the children make the transition.
- Improving information-sharing procedures and increasing parent input in describing the children's interests, motivations and learning styles, along with any special problems or needs.
- Reviewing record-keeping procedures to see if common record items or processes could be designed to facilitate transition. Developing better understanding of the expectations of the public school for children entering from Head Start, ("survival skills"), particularly for children with special needs.
- Developing information and support resources for parents who formerly had dental care and other social services and health care provided and need to learn to access resources more independently. A special focus should be contacts with other parents already in the public school system.
- Increasing awareness of cultural and ethnic differences which may exist among children making the transition and their families which the school may not be aware of.
- Developing ways to assure that the transition assistance activities which prove to be effective are continued by the school and Head Start which demonstrated them after the discretionary grant period.

The impetus for the transition initiative came from ACYF Commissioner Dodie Livingston's desire to respond to key findings of the Head Start Synthesis Project which showed children achieving dramatic cognitive and

socioemotional success in Head Start which declined once they entered school. The disparity between the Head Start and elementary school approaches to early childhood education and parental involvement was seen as a major deterrent to the continued accelerated progress made by the children once they entered school.

Fifteen Head Start programs were selected as grantees to demonstrate a variety of approaches to improve transition. ACYF then undertook this assessment of their efforts. This study was originally designed to be the formative component of a formative and summative evaluation. As such it was designed to obtain data on project implementation, successes and obstacles which could be fed back to the programs for improvement. It would also serve as a baseline or pretest for the summative evaluation, comparing goals and objectives to achievements at project end.

The formative component has been completed. It is uncertain whether the summative evaluation will be conducted. Thus some of the data do not obtain completeness without it.

Methodology

All fifteen grantees were surveyed by mail or through personal interviews. All but one site cooperated in the study. Due to the unfortunate delay in data collection caused by OMB reviews, mail surveys reached programs near the end of the program year and other activities prevented a high response rate from all categories of respondents. (See Table I).

Table I
Evaluation Response Rates By Type of Respondent

Type of Respondent	Number Surveyed	Number Returns	Response Rate
Head Start Director	15	13	87
Head Start Teacher	15	9	60
Head Start Parents	30	17	57
Education Coordinator	15	12	80
Health Coordinator	15	11	73
Social Services Coordinator	15	10	67
Parent Involvement Coordinator	15	11	73
Handicapped Coordinator	15	11	73
School District Official	15	5	33
Elementary Principal	15	8	53
Elementary Teacher	15	10	67
Total	180	117	65

Site Visit Sample

Of the fifteen transition grantees, five were selected for site visits. The programs were chosen for variation in program approach, geographic distribution and auspice variability (school/non-school operated). Only programs that were fully operational were included. The programs selected were:

- Chapel Hill Outreach Program, Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (Lead Grantee) - Dr. Anne Sanford, Director
- Community Action Committee of Pike County, Piketon, Ohio - Lynn Adams, Director
- City of Rockford Human Resources Department, Rockford, Illinois - Susan Hessian, Director
- Schohairie County Child Development Council, Cobleskill, New York - Juanita Jackson, Director
- Shawnee County Community Assistance and Action, Inc., Topeka, Kansas - Theresa Counts, Director

Interviews were conducted with the following types of respondents in each location:

- Head Start Director
- Head Start Component Coordinators (Education, Health, Parent Involvement, Social Services, Handicapped)
- Head Start Teacher
- School District Official
- School Principal
- School Teacher
- Two former Head Start parents whose children were currently in kindergarten

Site visits were conducted by CSR senior staff in the spring of 1987. Two-day visits were made to each program. Prior to the visit, key respondents were asked to list the objectives of the transition project, the activities

planned to meet those objectives and progress made on each activity. These items were reviewed with the participants during the visit.

This approach was designed to capture the unique characteristics of each program, while other parts of the interviews were designed to obtain information on activities conducted by all grantees.

School personnel and parents were chosen using a random procedure. In some cases informal interviews were held with other relevant respondents (e.g. school superintendent) at the grantee's request.

Information was also obtained from the grant proposals, quarterly progress reports (when available) and other written materials produced by the grantees.

Mail Survey Sample

The remaining ten sites were surveyed by mail. The same types of respondents received self-administered questionnaires which were returned directly to CSR. If directors thought parents might have difficulty completing questionnaires local Head Start staff interviewed the parents.

The ten mail sites were:

Boulder County Commissioners
Boulder, Colorado
Patricia McMahon, Director

City of Chicago Human Services
Chicago, Illinois
Charlene Preston, Director

Kids and Kin, Inc.
Eugene, Oregon
Patrick Robinson, Director

Maricopa County Human Resources Department
Phoenix, Arizona
Irma Moreno, Director

Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin
Oneida, Wisconsin
Mary Ellen Hayes, Director

South Central Community Action Agency
Twin Falls, Idaho
Donna Suhr, Director

Southern Ilinois University at Edwardsville
East St. Louis, Illinois
Dr. Willie Epps, Director

St. Vrain Valley Child Development Council
Longmont, Colorado
Bette Haas, Director

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council
Crookston, Minnesota
Dennis DeMers, Director

Yes, Inc.
Columbia, S.C.
Jean Schwartz, Director

Each program had a unique approach to transition but many also had elements in common. The next section presents narrative descriptions of the fifteen transition projects. Analyses of the quantifiable data collected from all fifteen sites follows in the next section.

Narrative Descriptions of 15 Transition Grantees

Sites Visited

Chapel Hill Training - Outreach Project, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

The Chapel Hill Training - Outreach Project was designated the Lead Grantee for the transition initiative. The model developed by the Outreach Project was designed for replication by other Head Start programs. Materials were developed for that purpose including a notebook and slide presentation.

Chapel Hill is the location of the University of North Carolina and as such is a generally highly educated community. In fact, over 30% of the public school enrollment meets the state criteria for gifted/talented (minimum I.Q. of 130). This creates two distinct segments of the school population with the low-income, minority children (often from single parent homes) served by Head Start being especially "at risk," and in need of special attention as they make the transition to public school.

The Chapel Hill Head Start is part of the Chapel Hill - Carrboro school system and shares an administrative office building with school officials. However, even with this degree of program integration, the Head Start still identified the following needs

- o to increase interaction between Head Start and the school system,
- o to increase parent involvement in transition,
- o to increase the children's preparation for kindergarten,
- o to have a systematic record transfer process and,
- o to develop a detailed written agreement with the school system.

A number and variety of activities were undertaken to accomplish these goals.

A key component of the transition effort was an Interagency Transition Committee composed of Head Start and school system staff to develop the transition process. Regular meetings were held with school administrative staff, kindergarten teachers and the Special Education Coordinator to discuss Head Start and the progress of the children, especially handicapped children, in kindergarten. Half-day exchange visits between the Head Start and school staff were also held which school staff found very helpful.

Parents were involved in the transition effort through written information, parent meetings, parent visits to the schools, facilitation of kindergarten pre-registration and the provision of support for parents when the children enter kindergarten. The project also developed a slide show and video presentation to present information about school to the parents.

Children were prepared for transition through visits to the kindergarten, a videotape about kindergarten, classroom activities about transition and summer activity packets and book lists.

Head Start teachers worked with children on skills that they would need in kindergarten such as learning to get on and off the bus independently, to answer questions about themselves and their families, to wait, take turns and share, and to try new things. Having Head Start classrooms located in an elementary school was viewed as an advantage because it made the children more familiar with the school, the kindergarten teachers, the cafeteria, custodian, fire drills, etc. It also allowed the kindergarten teachers to get to know the Head Start children informally and to understand the goals and methods of Head Start.

Another goal that was successfully implemented was the development of a systematic record transfer process. This included obtaining informed parental

permission for record transfer, arranging delivery of records to the appropriate schools, and sharing the contents of the records with principals, the Special Services (handicapped program) staff and the kindergarten teachers.

The school staff interviewed concurred with the Outreach Project staff on the goals of the effort. School staff also felt that the process worked well and cited three key reasons for this success. First, the School Board had issued a statement supporting cooperation between Head Start and the schools. School personnel felt that the attitude this statement reflected had permeated the school system. Second, the Transition Committee was seen as key in promoting Head Start-school interaction and communication as a vehicle more effective than written materials. Even though the committee did not meet as often as planned, the exchange visits to classrooms that the committee facilitated were considered very helpful. Third, Head Start's efforts to ensure that Head Start children were pre-registered for kindergarten was viewed as very effective. In the spring Head Start teachers visited the homes of the children who would enter kindergarten and gave each parent the necessary preregistration information. They discussed the importance of preregistration, explained the screening process that would occur in the fall and offered transportation. Over 70 percent of the eligible children were registered as a result of the effort.

There were some statements of concern from both the schools and Head Start about the differences in educational approach between the two entities with Head Start being more developmental and informal while kindergarten was more structured. This made the move from Head Start to kindergarten a real change for the children. However because the kindergartens used a learning center approach, the discrepancy was not seen as too great.

More serious concerns were expressed about the parents' transition from the supportive Head Start environment to the more impersonal school system.

While the situation was seen as improving, there were statements that parents distrusted the schools or were hesitant to deal with them. Head Start and the transition project were seen as helping to dissipate this distrust.

Community Action Committee of Pike County, Piketon, Ohio

The Piketon Transition program focused on parent education, especially helping parents realize the important role they have in the education of their children and encouraging continued involvement in the childrens' education once they enter school. This focus extended to health goals and efforts for handicapped children as well. In addition, a major part of the transition effort was familiarizing the children with the kindergarten classrooms and teachers through class visits.

All 140 children in the Piketon Head Start were involved in the program's transition project. Of the 120 children to attend kindergarten, 70% had been in the home-based component of the program.

Parent training sessions were held for each group of home visitors' parents and PREP packages and film strips were used to inform parents about the importance of participating in their child's education. (PREP packets are Parents Record of Educational Progress and contain information about child development from kindergarten through the school years and pockets for storing report cards, immunization records and other important materials.)

Visits to kindergarten were arranged for the children, but only the parents who drove the children to the kindergarten also visited the classrooms and met the kindergarten teachers. All parents were provided with a kindergarten checklist of activities, a "summer fun" calendar, and a copy of the child's evaluation. Transportation was offered for kindergarten registration and parents were kept up-to-date through newsletters and personal contacts.

In the health component, information was provided to parents about school entrance requirements such as immunizations. Staff also conferred with them about medical records, treatment needs and early dental education.

An effort was made to inform parents of handicapped children of the child's right to an education. The handicapped coordinator transferred the Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and teacher evaluations to the schools and told the parents she would attend placement meetings with them if they wished. She also planned to follow up on these children's progress in the school system.

Transition efforts were also directed at the school system itself. In an effort to broaden the school system's understanding of the depth of Head Start and ease the transition to school, informal group meetings were held with school personnel. Field trips were made to the school by the teachers and children and kindergarten teachers visited the Head Start classrooms. Personal friendships between Head Start staff and school staff were seen as facilitating transition. Where these existed, relationships were much more cooperative than where they did not exist.

Future plans included more formal presentations by Head Start at the schools' June retreat for its teachers as well as written materials. A newspaper article was also published describing the transition effort.

The school system personnel generally perceived the transition process as beneficial to the children and the school system. The assistance provided by Head Start in getting children registered was seen as a very positive impact. "These immunization records are a big problem every year, but with Head Start it's all taken care of," was one comment. In addition, school personnel felt that the transition project classroom visits had helped the children to be more familiar with [redacted]achers and kindergarten. Also they felt it had provided a

way for Head Start to "prove itself" to the schools and to help the kindergarten teachers and nurse "see what Head Start is and what it has to offer... it's lending credibility to the Head Start program in the eyes of school personnel. Schools may see and use Head Start more as a resource than they have."

However not all schools were viewed as being so positive about Head Start. Several respondents mentioned schools and teachers that did not welcome Head Start's classroom visits and criticized Head Start's efforts to arrange classroom visits as "dictating to them."

Comments on both effective and ineffective transition efforts focused on the classroom visits. Where kindergarten teachers were supportive of the visits and prepared for them with appropriate activities for the children, the visits were considered to be positive transition experiences. Where kindergarten teachers had not made any such efforts, Head Start staff felt they and the children were not welcome.

City of Rockford Human Resources Department, Rockford, Illinois

In a community facing many inner city problems and in which busing of school children had created tensions between families and schools, the Head Start transition project worked to facilitate the linkages between Head Start and the schools, to increase parent involvement in the schools and maintain the cognitive gains children made in Head Start.

The Head Start is operated by a community action agency and is a home and center based program for 284 children of whom 193 entered kindergarten in 1987.

The desire for a transition project grew from Head Start's concern that if Head Start children entering school experience school failure and a loss of self esteem early in their school careers they will drop out of school eventually. The concern was exacerbated by the fact that while 80% of Head Start

children were black, most school teachers were white. To compound this, neighborhood schools did not exist and children were bused to school.

There was also a perceived need to foster the parents' continuation of their involvement in their children's education after Head Start.

The program created a liaison position, a Parent Support Specialist, to work directly with parents and teachers from both the schools and Head Start to promote understanding of the efforts and requirements of both organizations.

Kindergarten committees were established to promote parent involvement. Modeled on Head Start Parent Committees, these groups of parents met monthly at the school to discuss classroom activities and concerns. The program saw the number of parents of kindergarten children attending kindergarten committee meetings (40%) as a major success. Also successful was the relationship established with the public schools that produced credibility that enabled Head Start to interact successfully with the schools. To further enhance parent involvement, Head Start parents visited the local schools before the children enrolled, received monthly newsletters and home visits during the kindergarten year and were encouraged to volunteer in the kindergarten classrooms.

Other activities to assist parents included efforts to inform parents of educational resources in the community (such as helping them to obtain library cards), to enroll in a GED program, and to enroll in the public schools "At Risk" program. Parent workshops were held quarterly to improve parenting skills related to child success in school, and to familiarize parents with the kindergarten classroom and school.

Efforts were made to prepare the children for school by having visits between kindergarten and Head Start teachers to inform the Head Start teachers of the "survival" skills the children would need in school. Head Start teachers

attended kindergarten curriculum meetings so they would know what skills were needed in the elementary school. In addition the children visited the kindergarten classes, received Summer Activity booklets, and were registered for Summer Head Start as appropriate. One problem with the kindergarten field visits was that the school staff did not know to which class a child would be assigned so the children only visit a kindergarten, not necessarily the one they would attend. Head Start staff were pleased with the school teachers' positive response to the kindergarten field trips. The children also were excited about the trip and the staff felt the children were able to learn what was to be expected of them in the "big peoples' school."

In order to improve understanding between the two systems, meetings were held between Head Start and school teachers, principals and the assistant superintendent of elementary education. These meetings reinforced the cooperation formalized in a written agreement between the two systems which had been in effect for five years.

As a result of the written agreement, cooperative efforts were made in regard to referrals, children bused to one school received lunch at Head Start, and joint training was conducted using the High/Scope curriculum.

Information and records on children were transmitted from Head Start to the schools, but there was some evidence that these records did not get to the kindergarten teachers.

The program had an active handicapped transition effort with special attention paid to the transition of these children including Head Start participation in "staffings" on children, observations of children with potential problems in school, and coordination with other community agencies.

Head Start staff felt that there was discontinuity for the children

between the Head Start program that was "child-directed and open ended" and the completely "teacher-directed, structured" program in the schools, an "academic" kindergarten.

The transition project was viewed as very successful at one school where the principal and teachers were enthusiastic, but as having more limited success in two other schools where it was more difficult to obtain parent participation and a history of parent/school hostility further undermined efforts.

Schoharie County Child Development Council, Cobleskill, New York

The Cobleskill/Schoharie Head Start's transition project focused on children in kindergarten and relied on a Transition Liaison as a primary component of the transition effort. In addition, the project established a parent volunteer program in each participating kindergarten, joint training of Head Start and kindergarten teachers, home visits, and visits to the kindergarten classrooms to promote transition. These activities were over and above the usual transition efforts. For example, children from Head Start entered public schools operated by several different school districts in Schoharie County. The transition project was undertaken in the two largest school districts. The involvement of the elementary school with the largest Head Start enrollment in each district was sought.

Head Start encouraged parents to attend kindergarten registration and screening and provided transportation if needed. Head Start gave parents the health summary form that was needed for registration.

Two meetings between Head Start and school personnel were held in each district to explain the transition grant and the parent volunteer system and to enlist cooperation. While the first school approached in one district refused to cooperate, the second one was agreeable. In the other district, the

first school contacted consented to participate. One of the superintendents was highly supportive. Two kindergarten classes in each school participated in the project.

The Head Start program served 118 children, 22 of whom were in the transition project. In the spring of 1986, the Transition Liaison arranged for the Head Start children to visit the kindergarten. Because the children's class assignments were unknown, the Liaison photographed the kindergarten teachers and, once the class assignment was made, gave each child his teacher's picture.

Once school started the Liaison worked with the former Head Start children in their kindergarten classes on a one-to-one basis, especially those children whom she thought might have problems. She also worked with children currently in Head Start to smooth the transition for the next year. She visited every pre-kindergarten family in August and conducted home visits for kindergarten children experiencing difficulties.

The Liaison coordinated the parent volunteer program in the kindergarten, in which the former Head Start parents worked as teacher aides. She also was available to attend meetings to discuss the IEP's of handicapped children and to serve as a parental and child advocate.

The year was clearly a very active one, especially for the Liaison who spent time each week in both the Head Start and kindergarten classes. There were some problems with the parent volunteer program, ranging from "over zealous" parents to parents who were unable to participate because of conflicts with work or school schedules or the lack of babysitters, or who failed to show up as scheduled. There were variations also in the school teachers' abilities to use parents well and make them feel welcome, but there were also success stories of positive relationships between volunteers and children.

The kindergarten teachers were asked to complete child rating forms at the beginning and end of the school year. Although these were done, the teachers disliked them because of the time required and difficulty in interpreting some of the questions. Plans were made to improve the process for the posttest.

The school personnel agreed with Head Start on the goals of the transition project. While they expressed concern about the lack of parent participation in the volunteer project, they felt that it was an important effort. They also felt that the transition program had increased communication between Head Start, the families and the schools, and that the children were having fewer adjustment problems.

Head Start staff felt that the one-to-one work in kindergarten with the children who needed extra help was especially effective in promoting both school success and self-esteem. The Liaison's presence in the classroom also provided a bridge for the children - a familiar face from Head Start. Staff also felt that parents who participated had a greater sense of what the child was experiencing in the classroom, what terms the teacher used etc. In order to convey these ideas to parents who were unable to participate as volunteers, the Liaison sent letters to them describing the activities in the school.

Shawnee County Community Assistance and Action, Topeka, Kansas

The Polk Child Development Center in Topeka focused its transition program on Head Start parents and Head Start staff. The major objectives were:

- To increase first-hand contact between the Head Start program and the public school
- To encourage staff participation with the transition project
- To involve parents in an active role in the transition project

Because the Head Start is operated by the school district, there was considerable support for the transition project both within Head Start and the

schools. To start the project, a very successful breakfast meeting was held at the beginning of the year for school personnel, parents and Head Start staff. Head Start staff felt that because Head Start was well-established in Topeka there was support and enthusiasm among school teachers and other staff. Even so, it was felt there was some misunderstanding of the Head Start concept among school personnel.

A transition planning team was established to initiate the project. This included school officials, parents, a Head Start teacher, kindergarten teacher and the principals of the three elementary schools most Head Start children attend.

A transition coordinator was hired to direct the project. Early on, orientation sessions were held with the superintendent of schools, elementary principals and other school administrators. In order to enhance coordination between staffs, orientation and workshop sessions were held for both Head Start and kindergarten teachers. In addition, these teachers visited each others classrooms.

Parents were the primary focus of the project and the main effort was to get them involved in the school activities. Many parents had had negative experiences with the school system and the project was designed to overcome them.

In addition to the orientation breakfast for parents, child development skill workshops were held and parent participation was encouraged in the spring kindergarten round-ups and school tours. The skill workshops, held monthly, were to educate parents in the developmental skills children need to succeed in school. Each kindergarten teacher was responsible for recruiting parent volunteers. In addition, teachers sent out letters to parents explaining what

behavioral changes children would have to make in kindergarten (e.g. sitting still more).

Head Start teachers also conducted home visits and held parent conferences to encourage parent input into descriptions of their child's interests, motivations and learning styles. Monthly and weekly newsletters were sent and telephone calls made to assist parents in understanding the developmental needs and basic skills of their children.

The major activity for the children was attendance at holiday parties at the elementary schools. Staff felt that this experience helped to allay some of the childrens' fears about school.

Classroom activities were planned to help children prepare for kindergarten. Activities included reading books about school and "acting out what school is like." Parents were sent activity lists for the children to help them feel comfortable with the school.

One of Head Start's greatest concerns was that the school was not oriented to child development concepts and had too much sedentary, "seat work" and workbook activities compared to Head Start with its learning center, developmental approach. Concerns were also expressed that the self-confidence of the children will be low in kindergarten and they would be "put down" because they were low-income and minority. The schools were also seen as having fewer resources - equipment, money, staff-child ratio - than Head Start.

School system personnel also saw the project as effective due to the high level of enthusiasm and cooperation in both the schools and Head Start. It was felt that the effort was somewhat chaotic at first and a single person was needed to coordinate the schools' component, for without this person the "elementary schools don't really care about Head Start."

The schools made an effort to get parents involved as volunteers in the classroom. In the past involvement had been poor. School personnel felt that many low-income parents were unable to read or write, were embarrassed and unlikely to participate and mistrusted the school system. When the schools received the list of parents from Head Start, they contacted them by mail and then held individual conferences with them to recruit them for the program.

Ten Grantees Surveyed By Mail

Maricopa County Human Resources Department Head Start, Phoenix, Arizona

The Maricopa County Human Resources Department Head Start transition project had three objectives:

- To provide parents with an intensive program of training related to the future educational and social service needs of their children
- To institute "teacher cross-orientation" to increase awareness and understanding of Head Start staff about the kindergarten curricula and vice versa
- To review the Head Start and kindergarten curricula in an effort to reduce discontinuity between them.

The program approached the first of these goals by conducting workshops for parents to provide them with information about the schools, medical and dental providers and social service agencies. It also provided them with intensive instruction in advocacy skills. Parents of handicapped children were specially trained in relevant laws and services in order to successfully advocate for their children.

Both Head Start and kindergarten staff visited each others' classrooms to observe the program and meet the children. In addition children in some Head Start classes visited the kindergartens.

The final effort involved the systematic review of both the Head Start and kindergarten curricula. An Interagency Curriculum Coordination Task Force observed and reviewed both curricula to attempt to make them more consistent. Because kindergarten was only offered two days a week for two hours a day in many locations, it was a much less intense educational experience than the four hour a day, four day a week Head Start program. Revisions in the kindergarten's two day curricula were designed to attempt to ameliorate these differences.

By the end of the 86-87 year, the parent training workshops and the teacher cross visits had been held, but the curriculum review was still in the planning stage.

Boulder County Commissioners Head Start, Boulder, Colorado

Even though the Boulder County Head Start and Boulder Valley School District had had an inter-agency agreement for six years and a Follow Through program, there was still a need to promote the transition of children from Head Start to school. A major reason for this was that expectations between Head Start and the school system differed in regard to the preparation of children for school, with Head Start stressing self concept and family involvement and the schools emphasizing academic and readiness skills. There was also concern that parents (especially non-English-speaking or illiterate parents) experienced alienation and a lack of involvement when their children entered school as compared to the greater involvement they experienced in Head Start.

The objectives of the project were:

- To increase the number of parents involved in the public school program
- To provide support services to children the summer before entering kindergarten
- To adapt information sent to schools on individual children

The program hired a Transition Coordinator who met with the public school principals and teachers routinely to coordinate efforts and plan the transition. A steering committee which included parents, was established as the focus for sharing the philosophies of the two programs.

Meetings were held between kindergarten and Head Start teachers regarding specific children's strengths and needs. In addition, meetings were held to identify the types of information the kindergarten teachers wanted. Forms were revised to accommodate requests and revised forms were presented to the Head Start and kindergarten teachers for their approval.

The education coordinator worked with the Head Start teachers to develop transition classroom activities for the children such as "doing kindergarten activities" and visiting kindergarten classrooms.

Plans were made to have Head Start staff meet during the summer with parents in groups according to the school their children would attend, and to arrange meetings between "new" and "old" kindergarten parents. There were also plans to provide a two day summer program for children and parents before kindergarten, and to provide therapy for special needs and handicapped children.

Parents visited kindergarten classrooms with the parent coordinator who discussed the classes with the parents following the observations.

The schools developed a pamphlet on "common kindergarten concerns" and an orientation package for the parents and assisted parents in attending kindergarten orientation and registration sessions.

While the time required for the staff activities was seen as a drawback by school personnel, Head Start staff felt that some of the parents who had been involved had more positive attitudes about the schools as a result of the project.

St. Vrain Valley Child Development Council, Longmont Head Start, Longmont, Colorado

In a community in which the majority of low-income residents were Hispanic, the Longmont Head Start program proposed to focus its transition efforts on developing linkages between Head Start and the schools, providing resources for parents and children and encouraging parents to take an active role in the schools.

Specific objectives were to:

1) Establish a Head Start/School Parent committee to act as a liaison between the two programs and serve as a clearinghouse for student problems.

2) Establish a Head Start Information Booth in two target area schools for use as a resource when problems arise.

3) Establish a Head Start hot breakfast program for children needing food with the use of parent volunteers as aides in the lunchroom.

4) Establish child care services for parents who were involved in school activities. The program was to be developed with the schools Career Development Center with students providing the child care services.

5) Establish a mental health service program for parents who were experiencing problems with their children in transition. The bilingual school psychologist would meet monthly with parents to discuss techniques to use in supporting children in transition.

6) Establish a link between the Computer Resource Center of the school district and Head Start to enable Head Start to use software available in the school district.

7) Elect one Head Start parent to serve on the Equal Opportunity Board of the school district.

8) Elect one Head Start parent to serve on the accountability committee for the school district.

9) Elect one school district staff member to the Head Start Grantee Board.

10) Establish a cooperative program of teacher training between the two systems.

Because the Longmont Head Start refused to participate in the evaluation, no information was available on progress made on these objectives.

City of Chicago Department of Human Services, Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago transition project was designed to provide a more successful and less stressful transition to school for 80 children in two of the city's Head Start programs (one of which was a parent-child center). The two selected programs were in "high need" areas in which 58% of the 3-5 year olds in one area and 78% in the second area were in poverty, 68 and 82% in the two respective areas lived in single parent families and median family income was $9,600 and $5,555, respectively.

Coordination of the project was conducted through work sessions with Board of Education and Head Start staff to exchange information, develop expectations and goals, and share program philosophies and materials. One change suggested by school personnel was for Head Start to eliminate the children's naps in the spring so they would adjust better to school.

The project was structured to include a pre/post test assessment of parental knowledge about transition. A parent orientation session was held to provide parents with information on the schools and on how to access services formerly provided by Head Start, such as medical, dental, mental health, social and handicap services.

Children and parents visited the kindergarten class and teacher at the public school on a "Welcome to Kindergarten Day" field trip. Parents returned to the center to discuss what they had learned. Transportation and babysitting was provided for the meeting.

A special kindergarten pre-registration was held just for the Head Start parents so they would have immunizations up-to-date and have any records they

would need at registration. This was designed to reduce parent and child stress at registration.

From these experiences a parent handbook was developed to provide information about what to expect when a child goes to school. The handbook was distributed to all 5,000 Head Start parents in the city.

The children visited the kindergarten with the parents, met the teacher and attended an art fair at the elementary school. Classroom discussions about kindergarten were also held with the children.

Health and other records were transferred to the schools only on request.

Project successes included the parents' pleasure at providing input for the handbook and the success of the pre-registration. Problems included the lack of time to complete all activities before the year ended (including publication of the handbook) and the implementation of transition activities with only one of the public schools in the area.

SIUE Head Start, East St. Louis, Illinois

The Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville Head Start at East St. Louis designed a transition project that focused on the development of a series of educational modules to assist Head Start and public school staff and parents in facilitating transition. The materials and process were combined in a training program for 100 parents called "The Transition of Head Start Parents to the Public School."

The project was directed by a Transition Planning and Assessment Task Force composed of school staff, Head Start staff, and Head Start parents. They met to develop a written agreement outlining objectives to facilitate transition and to develop materials. These materials plus a film were designed to assist Head Start staff and public school teachers and administrators to

facilitate transition. The materials also informed parents about differences between Head Start and public school goals, objectives and procedures. They contained information for parents on the parents' importance and the need for their involvement in their child's transition to public school. They also included techniques for parents to use to influence procedures and obtain access to information in public schools. Materials were also designed to help parents obtain access to community services.

Information from each child's records were given to the parent at the end of the year so that they could share the information with the teacher in the fall. These Teacher Information Packets (TIPS) included test results, a skills checklist, and a summary of health, handicapped and social services provided during the previous year.

These materials were used to train the 100 parents. A pre and post test evaluation was included to test the program's effectiveness.

Other activities were conducted to improve understanding of the Head Start program by school personnel. These included inviting school personnel to Head Start workshops, showing the Head Start video at area education meetings, inviting kindergarten teachers to Head Start open houses and participating in NAEYC conferences and early childhood fairs attended by area kindergarten teachers.

In addition children and parents visited the kindergarten classrooms, and a teaching module was developed for use the last few weeks of Head Start emphasizing the skills needed in kindergarten.

One of the program's major successes was the development of a collaborative agreement with the education agencies, as related to handicapped children. The agreement provided for auxiliary aides to Head Start, staff meetings with

parents and Head Start personnel to assist in the educational program design and to assist Head Start parents and staff in assuring the proper placement of children in the public schools.

South Central Community Action Agency Head Start, Twin Falls, Idaho

The SCCAA transition project was designed to ease the stress many Head Start families feel when their children enter the public school system. It was designed to serve 350 families in five counties over two years.

Activities were planned both to acquaint children with the new school but also to increase parents' self concepts and set up information sharing and support systems for them.

The major objectives for the project were to:

- o facilitate the parents' transition process
- o facilitate the children's transition process
- o develop relationships with the local school systems
- o share information with other preschool professionals

In addition a special effort was made to facilitate transition for families with a handicapped child.

The activities for the parents included the implementation of a parent buddy system in which former Head Start parents with children in school were linked with parents of Head Start children just entering school to serve as resources, emotional support and advocates for the new parents. Buddies received training and then helped parents with advocacy, transportation, language barriers and introductions of the parents to the school system.

In addition workshops were held for the parents, a "Transition Topics" newsletter was sent to them, and they visited a PTA meeting and kindergarten classroom with their children and the family educator. Home visits were made

to each parent to educate them about transition. Parents also reviewed the children's records and marked those they wanted released to the schools. A special effort was made to help non-English speaking families with the transition.

Children took field trips to the schools they would attend with their parents and their pictures were posted near pictures of the school at Head Start. They were also given the opportunity to practice survival skills needed for school. Teachers set up a "school" area in the Head Start classrooms with a blackboard and chalk, desks etc. Teachers and older children from the schools answered questions about school. Books and magazines about school were made available.

A Special Needs Coordinator was hired to develop and conduct training regarding the IEP process, parents' rights and responsibilities and self advocacy. The coordinator also acted as an observer at IEP meetings and staffings and served as a liaison with other agencies.

Efforts to develop relationships with local school systems included the development of a simplified form for sharing information with the schools, sending out test results to schools and identifying key persons in each system to serve as liaisons.

In addition the program made an effort to share their transition experiences with other Head Start programs and schools through presentations at local, area, and state early childhood meetings.

A booklet was developed that explained Head Start program goals and philosophies for distribution to the schools.

The health coordinator developed a "health highlight" sheet to provide updated information on immunizations, growth etc. She also taught the children

health and hygiene skills that they would need in school such as washing their hands.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Head Start, Crookston, Minnesota

Eleven Head Start programs cooperated to create this school transition process in rural Minnesota. A central part of the process was the development of an assessment tool for parents to use in monitoring the development of their children.

An interdisciplinary approach was used to develop the tool involving pediatricians, dentists, nutritionists, counselors, and psychologists as well as Head Start and school staff.

The eleven Head Start programs obtained the cooperation of two local school districts each. Together the Head Start programs and schools field tested the process and tool.

A Transition Workshop for parents, Head Start staff and public school personnel was held by the Child Development Training Program at Bemidji State University in the spring of 1986 and a follow-up workshop was held in March 1987.

Following the field test, the process and tool were refined and disseminated to the participating Head Start agencies.

Transition activities planned or implemented included having kindergarten teachers speak at Head Start parent meetings, providing written lists of the schools' expectations of children entering kindergarten for parents; taking the children on a field trip to a local kindergarten; having the children attend the kindergarten round-up in the spring; talking with the children about kindergarten and conducting conferences with parents to discuss the child's development and kindergarten readiness.

For handicapped children, Head Start teachers conducted two IEP meetings during the year and had the future kindergarten teacher sit in on the IEP meeting. The project also obtained the appropriate tests for the child's evaluation, talked with parents about alternatives if the child would not enter kindergarten, supported parents by providing information and answering questions about kindergarten, and set up meetings for Head Start teachers to discuss general concerns and expectations of handicapped children.

The Tri-Valley program was quite rural and Head Start children attended many small school districts. One staff member noted that because of its rural character, the area "tends to be more informal than a Head Start in a large city. While our philosophy and goals may be the same, there seems to be a small town flavor with people having the same positions for a length of time. A familiarity develops between people and agencies." This informality was seen as fostering interaction between Head Start and the schools. Another staff member added, "I personally know these kindergarten teachers, so on an informal basis I feel comfortable talking to them about Head Start and children I've had that are presently in their classrooms."

Problems that were noted included the need for a coordinator to serve as a go-between for Head Start and the schools to set up and conduct meetings. In addition the lack of time for school teachers to provide a good transition program ("teachers just do not have "extra" time to do 'extra' things") was seen as a handicap.

Kids and Kin, Inc., Eugene, Oregon

Kids and Kin's transition project focused on educating parents in their rights and responsibilities for their children in school and developing assertiveness in parents to obtain these rights. The project also sought

to encourage the school district to involve parents more effectively and to improve Head Start/school relationships, communication and information flow. Head Start also worked to inform parents of the community resources available to them.

The Kids and Kin program operated 14 Head Start classrooms spread over a geographic area of 4,600 square miles. There were 37 different elementary schools which Head Start children attended so transition and coordination were difficult to arrange. In addition family financial problems, limited time and low skill levels inhibited parent involvement, even in Head Start.

A key component of the Kids and Kin project was the Parent Transition Facilitator who was hired to manage the project. This individual is responsible for conducting the project activities and assessing their effectiveness.

Efforts to coordinate the schools and Head Start were made by an interagency task force with representatives of both organizations and Head Start parents. The committee identified obstacles to parent involvement in the schools and developed improved methods for information sharing and record transfer. One of the most successful efforts was the convening of a meeting of Head Start, preschool and school personnel in April at which the needs of all groups were discussed in terms of facilitating transition. This was the first meeting of its type held since kindergartens were initiated in 1975.

The parent education component offered two assertiveness training workshops to parents to help them deal with the school system. Other workshops were designed to help parents to understand their children's educational needs and rights. Additional educational sources included written information, parent meetings and individual conferences.

Head Start staff received training in parents' roles in education and ways to involve parents. Training sessions also included public school staff who informed them about the schools' role in relation to parents and transition.

Resource lists were developed to inform parents about community services available to them.

An "interagency sheet" was developed to share briefly the pertinent information about children going on to public school. The sheet was completed by teachers and parents together. Head Start staff were trained in the use of the sheet and it was also offered to other preschool programs.

Special attention was paid to the parents of children with special needs in assuring their understanding of IEPs and options for children.

Individualized summer packets were developed for transitioning children. Field trips to the kindergarten were conducted for parents and children and the differences between Head Start and kindergarten were discussed with the children.

Head Start staff felt that the project was particularly successful due to the amount of information and support the parents received from the transition facilitator. "The comfort level of this year's parents compared to last year's parents is much higher. They feel that they are better prepared to advocate and challenge the public school system for their children as well as integrate into the system," commented one Head Start staff member.

Yes, Inc. Specially Funded Cluster, Columbia, South Carolina

The South Carolina project was especially unique in that it involved all 16 Head Start programs in the state and their 92 correspondent Local Education Association (LEA's). The project aimed to establish cooperative written agree- ments to establish policies and procedures for promoting successful transition between the Head Start programs and LEA's.

The project was developed because of a perceived need to document the informal procedures related to transition that were in use, partially because of the turnover in employment in Head Start and the LEA's. In addition there was some reluctance of Head Starts to work with the schools because of a fear of being "taken over" by them. This fear had increased since the establishment of mandatory kindergartens in South Carolina and the development of a program for 10,600 "educationally-at-risk" four-year olds under a grant resulting from the passage of PL 98-199. (However with Head Start serving 6,670 children and the schools serving 10,600 four-year-olds less than 50% of the children needing services were being reached.) Most Head Start programs had overcome this fear, but some had not and refused to work with the schools. Also it was felt that Head Start agencies were not always well-informed on the expectations of the schools in regard to transition procedures. Most of the transition communication had been limited to the handicapped component (12% of the Head Start children).

A two-day statewide meeting and two one-day follow-through meetings with technical assistance were conducted to develop the agreements.

The transition agreements developed included such provisions as the development of common record forms to ease the transfer of records, sending school personnel to the Head Start to screen and register children for kindergarten in the spring, and the identification of key contact positions in the schools and in Head Start so that even with staff turnover, key contact points will be identified. Each keyperson had an individual Gantt chart so that his/her activities in relation to transition could be tracked. Other activities included visits of Head Start children to the schools, attendance

by children of kindergarten for the last month of school after Head Start ended, involvement of parents in the planning and implementation of transition activities, and specification of parent responsibilities in transition.

Especially successful activities included the efforts of one Head Start and a large school district to develop generic forms and procedures to be used by Head Start, the schools, and the Departments of Social Services, Health and Environmental Control, Mental Retardation and Mental Health.

However, in some locations, schools were still finding Head Start forms and health requirements such as the lack of birth certificates and immunization records inadequate for the schools' needs.

A slide tape presentation and brochure were developed for dissemination in the state and region.

Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin Head Start, Oneida, Wisconsin

The Oneida Head Start Program had a unique situation in regard to transition in that children who leave Head Start may go to the Oneida Tribal School or the local public school district. Thus the Head Start had to arrange transition relationships with both systems.

The Oneida Head Start focused its project on strengthening communications between Head Start and families and developing assertiveness in parents. Other efforts included meetings with tribal and public school staff, and promoting a smooth transferral of health records. An intrinsic part of the process was the evaluation of parental attitudes towards school.

A series of six workshops for parents and school personnel were planned to discuss appropriate developmental expectations for children, understanding children's needs in transition, and nurturing strategies for families. A token

reward and contract system was set up to encourage parents to attend the workshops. In addition individual parent conferences or home visits were held to discuss each child's skill development and the activities parents could do at home to enhance it. Also discussed were staff recommendations about readiness for kindergarten entry and the need to work closely with the child's school. In addition, summer "homework" packets were developed for parents to assist children in skills needed for kindergarten.

A "Kindergarten Day" was held to allow teachers and children to observe kindergarten first hand. This was considered one of the most successful activities. It was carefully planned by both Head Start and the schools and was the focus of considerable anticipation by all involved. Not only did it give the children an opportunity to see what kindergarten was like, it also gave kindergarten teachers an opportunity to see how the students "stay on task, socialize, follow directions, etc."

The relationships between the Head Start and the schools was formalized through a School Board resolution. Also, an experimental "tracking system" was developed to enable Head Start staff to follow children about whom they are concerned in the public schools.

The health component also promoted transition by completing family health histories and child health work with each family to be forwarded to the schools. Any chronic health conditions, especially those that might need specific care, such as asthma or seizures, were noted for discussion with the classroom teachers. Signed agreements were developed with the Oneida Community Health Center to provide screenings and follow-up treatment for Head Start children.

The Head Start planned to disseminate its transition initiative through the National Indian Head Start Directors Association.

Integrative Analysis of Transition Grantees

Complete Sample Description

The characteristics of the thirteen Head Start transition grantees responding to the formative evaluation were the following:

Grantee/Delegate
- o 10 were grantees, 3 were delegates

Program Model
- o 6 were center-based only
  5 were center and home-based
  1 was variation in center attendance
  1 was a private non profit training firm that did not directly operate a Head Start program

Auspices
- o 5 or 38.5% were operated by private non-profit organizations
  4 or 30.8% by CAA's
  2 or 15.4% by schools
  1 or 7.7% by a government agency
  1 or 7.7% by an Indian tribe

Enrollment
- o Range from 80 to 6,670 children; median - 246 children
  Number leaving Head Start to enter elementary school - range 51 to 465, median - 120
  Number in the transition project - range 0 to 300
  Number in transition project that were handicapped - range 3 to 800

Corresponding Schools
- o Programs worked with from 2 to 37 schools on transition, median 5.5 schools

Head Start Perspective - Directors and Component Coordinators Reports

Transition Activities

As described earlier each program developed its own model for transition. The individual approaches of each program were described in the previous section. The common activities conducted by some or all grantees are presented here.

Six of the grantees hired a special transition staff member for the project. Generally, these individuals were responsible for directing the project, but their responsibilities varied from program to program. Some conducted training for staff and parents, others set up Head Start/school meetings and one worked directly with the children in the Head Start and kindergarten classrooms. In the remaining programs, the regular staff operated the transition project.

Programs were asked about specific activities being conducted and the progress they were making on those activities, that is, if the activity was something they normally would do or something being done because of the transition grant. If being done because of the grant, programs were asked to indicate if they were "planning to do this," "currently doing this," "had completed this," "had completed and will repeat this" or if they "will not do this." The progress questions were designed to gauge achievement of goals from the time of the formative to the summative evaluation.

For the sake of simplicity, some of these categories were collapsed for the analysis. Presented here are the activities which were normally done, would not be done, or were being planned or done as a result of the transition grant.

As Table 2 reveals, most of the grantees were conducting the types of activities defined by the grant announcement as relevant to transition. Almost all were participating in joint planning with school staff, although five of the responding programs normally did this.

A surprisingly large number (5) were not planning to develop written agreements with the schools regarding transition, although seven either were doing this or normally did it. The lack of written agreements may stem from a frequently heard statement that relationships were informal and written agreements were not needed.

Most programs had met with the school administration and had reviewed Head Start and school recordkeeping procedures to see if common record items could be developed.

Almost all of the programs had provided information to the schools on Head Start's purpose, its preparation of parents for transition, and its parent involvement, health and social services components. Five of the programs did not inform the schools about the cultural and ethnic differences between Head Start and other children, usually noting that the children in their service areas were virtually all of the same race.

Transmittal of Records

The majority of the grantees were providing a variety of types of information to the schools as part of their transition efforts. (Table 3)

Medical records, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) for handicapped children and certification of handicapping conditions were provided by the largest number of programs. Eighty-three percent provided certification for all handicapped children, 77% provided IEP's for all handicapped children and 77% provided medical or dental records for all children. Speech, vision and hearing test results were also transmitted for all children by ten programs. Somewhat surprisingly only 8 programs submitted the names of all children to the schools.

Seven programs did not provide any social service records to the schools and only two programs provided them for all children. Programs frequently stated that such records were particularly confidential, that families did not want them released, and that they could easily be misused.

Table 2
Activities Performed by
Transition Grantees

Activity	Grantee Action on Activity: Normally Do This N	%	Doing This As Part of Transition Project N	%	Will Not Do This N	%
Participated in joint planning with school staff about transition procedures or transfer of child records	5	38.5	7	53.9	1	7.7
Developed a written agreement with the school district or an individual school	1	8.3	6	49.9	5	41.7
Met with the school superintendent or assistant superintendent	3	23.1	8	61.6	2	15.4
Reviewed Head Start and school record keeping procedures to see if common record items or processes could be developed	2	15.4	9	69.3	2	15.4
Provided the elementary school(s) with written materials or formal presentations containing information on:						
The purpose of Head Start, classroom method or ways that children are prepared for elementary school	3	23.1	9	69.3	1	7.7
What the program does to prepare parents for their child's entering elementary school	1	7.7	12	93.3	-	-

Table 2
(Continued)

Activity	Normally Do This N	Normally Do This %	Doing This As Part of Transition Project N	Doing This As Part of Transition Project %	Will Not Do This N	Will Not Do This %
The program's parent involvement program	4	30.8	9	69.3	-	-
The program's health and social services component	5	38.5	8	61.5	-	-
The cultural and ethnic differences between Head Start children and other school children	3	25	4	33.3	5	41.7

Table 3
Number of Programs Providing
Information to Schools By
Percentage of Children For
Which Item Is Provided

Type of Information	Number of Programs Providing Items by Percentage of Children for Whom They are Provided							
	All 100%		Most 50-99%		Some 1-49%		None	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Names of Head Start children who will enter elementary school	8	61.5	2	15.4	1	7.7	2	15.4
Results of developmental screenings	6	46.2	3	23.1	2	15.4	2	15.4
Results of speech, vision or hearing tests	9	69.2	2	15.4	2	15.4		
Results of developmental tests	4	30.8	2	15.4	5	38.5	2	15.4
Medical or dental records	10	76.9			3	23.1		
Social services records	2	15.4			4	30.8	7	53.8
Teacher reports on child strengths and weaknesses	6	46.2	4	30.8	1	7.7	2	15.4
Parent reports about child's interests, motivations, learning styles & special needs	2	15.4	3	23.1	4	30.8	4	30.8
Individual Education Plans for Handicapped Children	10	76.9	3	23.1				
Certification of the handicapping condition	10	83.3	1	8.3	1	8.3		

Staff Involvement in Transition

The majority of programs reported that Head Start staff including coordinators and teachers were involved in the transition process through transmittal of records, receiving guidance on transition activities for children and participating in meetings or presentations with the schools. (Table 4)

Programs were more likely to involve teachers in meetings with the schools and to provide them with guidance on children's activities as a result of the transition project than as a part of normal activities.

Staff Concerns About Transition

Directors were asked about staff concerns in relation to transition. The most frequently cited concerns were that the children would not be ready for the academic demands of school and that the school staff might not encourage parents to become involved in school activities. (Table 5) The majority of programs were concerned that school staff might not assist parents in helping their children adjust to school and that information on the children might not be used appropriately by the school. The majority of programs (9) were not concerned that school staff would not speak the children's primary language usually because all the children spoke English.

The programs were doing a number of similar activities to assist parents with transition. (Table 6) Efforts undertaken because of the transition project included ways to put former Head Start parents in contact with other parents already in the school system (10 programs), information for parents on how to deal with the school their child was entering (10 programs), opportunities for parents to be actively involved in the planning, implementation and assessment of the transition project activities (9 programs), and helping parents understand what to look for and what to do about their child's feelings

Table 4
Head Start
Staff Involvement in
Transition Activities

	Action on Activity					
	Normally Do This		Are Doing This As Part of Transition Grant		Will Not Do This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Most Head Start program coordinators and teachers are participating in the process for transferring records to the elementary school	6	46.2	6	46.2	1	7.7
Most Head Start teachers are receiving guidance or training on activities to help prepare children for elementary school	4	30.8	9	69.2		
Teachers are directly involved in meetings or presentations with the schools to promote transition	3	25	8	66.6	1	8.3

Table 5

Directors' Reports on
Staff Concerns About Transition
of Children Into School

Type of Concern	Number of Directors Expressing Concern: Staff Concerned N	Staff Concerned %	Staff Not Concerned N	Staff Not Concerned %
Children might not be ready for academic demands of school	11	84.6	2	15.4
School staff might not encourage parents to become involved in school activities or decision-making groups	11	84.6	2	15.4
School staff might not work with Head Start parents in helping children adjust to school	8	61.5	4	30.8
Information on individual children might not be used appropriately by the schools	6	54.5	5	45.5
School teachers will not speak the primary language of the children or parents	4	30.8	9	69.2

and reactions to being in elementary school (7 programs). Activities reported as normally being done for parents included suggestions for summer activities or book lists (10 programs), information on how parents can help their children practice skills needed for elementary school (8 programs) and training for parents on how to access health and social services. Other activities that most programs undertook (about half as normal programs efforts and half as a result of the transition project) included assertiveness training for parents, and helping Head Start parents understand what to look for and what to do about their child's feelings and reactions to being in elementary school.

They used a variety of methods of conveying this information. Most popular were group discussions or workshops followed by individual parent discussions, written materials and audiovisual presentations (Table 7).

Activities for Children

The grantees used a variety of activities to prepare the children for transition. (Table 8) Arranging for the children to visit the school was one of the most popular as was talking with the children about ways elementary school will differ from Head Start. Children were also given classroom activities to help them practice the skills needed in school. Less frequently attempted was arranging for the children to meet the new teacher because children were not assigned to a specific teacher until the fall.

While the majority of the programs were undertaking these activities because of the transition project, a sizable minority normally did them.

Problems Encountered in Transition

Directors were asked to rank the three greatest problems in their transition projects. (Table 9) Eleven directors responded to the question, two stated there were no problems. Five programs cited parents as lacking skills for dealing with the elementary school personnel or environment as a

Table 6
Transition
Activities For Parents

Type of Activity	Action on Activity: Normally Do This N	%	Doing This As Part of Transition Project N	%	Will Not Do This N	%
Opportunity for parents to be actively involved in the planning, implementation and assessment of the transition project activities	3	23	9	69	1	7
Information for parents on how to deal with the school their child will be entering	3	23	10	77		
Training in assertiveness or advocacy for their children with the school system	6	46	6	46	1	7
Suggestion for summer activities or a list of books parents can read to their children	10	77	3	23		
Information on how parents can help their children practice skills needed for elementary school	8	62	5	38		
Training for parents who may need to access health and social services without Head Start assistance	7	54	5	38	1	7
Ways to put former Head Start parents in contact with other parents already in the school system	2	15	10	77	1	7
Helping Head Start parents understand what to look for and what to do about their child's feelings and reactions to being in elementary school	6	46	7	54		

Table 7
Methods Used
To Provide
Information on Transition Efforts
To Parents

Method Used*	Number and Percent of Programs Using This Method	
	N	%
Written materials	12	92
Group discussions or workshops	13	100
Individual discussions with parents	12	92
Audiovisual presentations	10	77

*Programs could use more than one method

Seven of thirteen programs had arranged for special people, either staff or other parents to work directly with the Head Start parents to help them understand and adjust to the school. These included "parent mentors," parents whose children were already in the school and were enthusiastic about their experiences who helped the "new" parents.

Table 8
Activities To
Prepare Children For
Transition

	Number of Programs Providing Activity By Progress on Activity					
	Normally Do This		Doing This Because of Transition Grant		Will Not Do This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Head Start staff talk with children about ways elementary school will differ from Head Start	6	46	7	54		
Head Start arranges for children to:						
visit school	5	39	8	61		
meet new teacher	2	17	8	66	2	17
Children are given classroom activities to help them practice skills needed for elementary school	6	46	6	46	1	8

problem although only one program ranked this first. Five programs cited a lack of trust between Head Start and the school system and the fact that too many schools were involved as problems. The lack of time or money to conduct the project or the delay in grant funding was cited by four programs. The lack of cooperation from the school board or school staff, too many children being involved and children lacking the skills to deal with the elementary school personnel or environment were noted by two programs each. One director each noted the following problems: Head Start staff do not cooperate, there is no written agreement with the school system, and it is not possible to identify the child's kindergarten teacher before enrollment.

Critical Incidents - Barriers

Directors were asked to describe a single situation during the transition project in which the Head Start's efforts encountered barriers to transition. (Table 10) Three programs cited a lack of cooperation or respect by school officials for Head Start. For example, one director described a Head Start field trip to the kindergartern. One kindergarten teacher had not prepared any activities for the children, another did not meet any of the children, and none of the teachers seemed happy to see the Head Start group.

Two directors felt school programs were inadequate for the children. As one described it "children have been in a Head Start program that is child-directed, open-ended and [they move] into a completely teacher-directed, structured program...with the academic kindergarten, children are unable to adjust satisfactorily."

Table 9
Problems
Programs Encountered
in Transition Project

Problem	No. of Programs Ranking Problem 1st, 2nd or 3rd		No. of Programs Ranking Problem First	
	N	%	N	%
Parents lack skills for dealing with the elementary school personnel or environment	5	45	1	9
Lack of trust between Head Start and the school system	5	45	2	18
Too many schools are involved	5	45	3	27
Lack of time or money to conduct the project or delay in grant funding created problems	4	36	2	18
There is little cooperation from the school board or school staff	3	27	1	9
Too many children are involved	2	18	2	18
Children lack skills for dealing with the elementary school personnel or environment	2	18		
Head Start staff do not cooperate	1	9		
There is no written agreement with the school system	1	9		
It is not possible to identify the child's kindergarten teacher before enrollment	1	9		

N = 11

Others identified institutional school problems, a lack of money, problematic parental decisions and a small number of children at the target school as causing problems.

Directors were also asked to describe situations in which transition efforts were effective. Of the ten directors responding, four noted instances in which a specific child was assisted in the transition to school. For example in one program a parent wanted testing for her child who was repeating kindergarten. The school teacher felt it was not necessary which the Head Start staff felt was due to her low expectations for the child. The parent asked the Head Start Parent Support Specialist to intervene and testing was eventually arranged. In another case the transition liaison worked closely with children who were having problems in kindergarten and arranged for testing for them. (The school was reluctant to provide testing because of the cost.)

Activities to help the children adjust to kindergarten, cited by three programs included successful visits to kindergartens in which the kindergarten teachers planned activities especially for the Head Starters, greeted them, and helped them to be better acquainted with the school.

In another case a concerted effort by Head Start using home visits and offers of transportation increased the pre-registration of Head Start children for kindergarten.

As a result of the transition effort in one program the LEA's have been willing to meet with Head Start and parents during the children's enrollment in Head Start and through a written collaborative agreement have provided aides to Head Start, assisted in the design of the educational program and assisted Head Start parents and staff in the proper placement of handicapped children in the public schools.

Another program has been successful in encouraging parents to deal with the school system, teaching them about child skills and child development and encouraging them to visit the classrooms.

Table 10
Situations Described As
Barriers to
Effective Transition

	Number of Directors Citing Barrier	
	N	%
There was a lack of cooperation or respect by school officials for Head Start	3	27
School programs were inadequate for children	2	18
There were institutional problems with the schools	2	18
Money available for the project was inadequate	2	18
Parental decisions or actions hindered a child's transition	1	9
Only a few Head Start children attended the transition target school	1	9

Table 11

Situations Described As
Examples of Effective
Transition

	Number of Directors Citing Example
A specific child was assisted in transition to school	4
Activities were held to help children adjust to and learn about school	3
Special effort to increase kindergarten preregistration was successful	1
New efforts have been made to improve the transition to and services for handicapped children	1
Parents have been encouraged to learn how to deal with the school system	1

School Staff Perspectives

Principals

A principal from a randomly selected elementary school that received Head Start children from each transition grantee was asked for his/her perspective on the project. Eight principals responded. All administered schools in which children entered at the kindergarten level. Six were white, one was Hispanic and one was American Indian. The number of children entering kindergarten in their schools in the fall of 1986 ranged from 27 to 398 with a median of 68. Of those children, from 3 to 45 had attended Head Start the previous year.

Principals were asked about the types of information Head Start programs transfer to them regarding individual children. They were asked if they were planning to receive, currently receiving, had already received the information, had already received and would receive again or would not receive the information. For simplicity, responses are grouped here by receiving or will not receive.

Principals were asked how they used the information they received from the Head Start programs. (Table 13) Almost all said they used information if they received it. Uses were fairly evenly distributed across the categories of placing children in a class or group, obtaining service or evaluation for a child or putting in the child's record.

Table 12

Principals' Reports on
Receipt of Child Information
From Head Start

Type of Information	Will Receive or Are Receiving		Will Not Receive	
	N	%	N	%
Results of developmental screenings (such as the Denver Developmental Test)	7	100	-	-
Results of speech, vision or hearing tests	7	100	-	-
Results of developmental tests (such as the Caldwell Preschool Inventory or Learning Assessment Profile)	2	40	3	60
Medical and/or dental records	7	87	1	13
Social services records	4	66	2	33
Head Start teacher's reports on the child's strengths and weaknesses	8	100	-	-
Parent reports about their children's interests, motivations, learning styles or special needs	4	57	3	43
(For handicapped children) Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives	5	83	1	17

As a group, the principal's reports on records received are fairly consistent with those of the directors with most receiving the items which Head Start programs said they sent.

Responding principals also stated their high frequency of participation in coordination of transition activities with Head Start and attributed almost all of these efforts to the transition project. Again their responses were fairly consistent with those of the directors.

As with the directors, over half of the responding principals said that they had not developed written agreements between the school district and Head Start aimed at helping children adjust to school.

In terms of referring for social or health services, all principals reported that they referred parents to physical and mental health care providers and to appropriate social service providers, as needed. Schools also provided written notices to parents if a particular service was needed such as immunizations. They provided certain health screenings and contacted medical personnel in child health emergencies.

These arrangements were the same for Head Start parents as for other parents for all but one principal.

When the children began school, almost all schools provided information to parents on school procedures and policies, the bus schedule, materials and supplies the child would need, opportunities for parent involvement and ways for the parent to help the child in school. Most provided no special information to Head Start parents.

All of the principals said that they or their staff members talked to parents of former Head Start children about their child's strengths, developmental level, screening needs, the child's physical/mental/emotional limitations or special needs, and ways for the parents to make their concerns about the child known to the staff.

Table 13

Use of Information
Received From Head Start*

Type of Information	Use: To place child in class or group		To obtain services or evaluations for child		To put in the child's record		Did/will not use	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Results of developmental screenings (such as the Denver Developmental Test)	3	25	4	33	5	42		
Results of speech, vision, or hearing test	2	17	6	50	4	33		
Results of developmental tests (such as the Caldwell Preschool Inventory or Learning Assessment Profile)	1	25	1	25	1	25	1	25
Medical and/or dental records			4	40	6	60		
Social services records			1	20	3	60	1	20
Teacher's reports on the child's strengths and weaknesses	3	23	5	38	5	38		
Parent reports about their children's interests, motivations, learning styles or special needs	3	27	4	36	4	36		
(For handicapped children) Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives	3	33	4	44	2	22		

*More than one response was acceptable in first three categories
N = 8; respondents noted uses only for those items that they had received

Table 14

School
Participation in
Coordination Activities
with Head Start

Activity	Progress on Activity: Normally Do This N	%	Planning, Doing or Have Done This Because of Transition Grant N	%	Will Not Do This N	%
Participated in joint planning with Head Start staff about the transition of Head Start children			8	100		
Met with school staff to discuss ways to facilitate the transition			7	87	1	13
Provided information to Head Start about the school (e.g., contact persons and phone numbers, registration procedures, school calendar)			8	100		
Arranged for Head Start children and/or parents to visit the school	1	14	6	86		
Developed written agreements between the school district and Head Start aimed at helping Head Start children adjust to school			2	0	3	60
Head Start provided the school with:						
Information about the purpose of Head Start or its classroom methods, or ways that Head Start children were prepared for elementary school			8	100		
Names of the Head Start children who will be entering elementary school			8	100		

Four of the principals said they normally do these things while two said they were doing them because of the transition project.

Principals identified the three greatest problems in the transition of Head Start children into elementary school. (Table 15)

Principals most frequently cited parental problems such as lacking skills for dealing with school personnel, lacking parenting skills or fearing the schools as both the biggest problems and the most frequent/first, second or third problem. Children lacking skills for dealing with school ranked second followed by the lack of a written agreement, inadequate information about individual children and not enough time to meet with Head Start staff.

The problems the principals identified were also reflected in the critical incidents they reported. Five reported situations in which problems with transition related to parents who were distrusting of the school or did not have the skills to deal with the school. The descriptions included the following:

"Any ongoing problem would relate to the people we're dealing with--poor, not well-educated, reluctant to deal with school officials, etc."

"A majority of parents are low-income, many cannot read or write. This has made some parents reluctant to get involved. They are embarrassed or mistrust the school - so they don't get involved. We have tried to get them involved through home visits."

"The barrier is the parent's hesitation to deal with school - parent fears are dissipated by Head Start."

"Occasionally there will be a parent who finds the age of "5" magic, and will insist that their child is now to attend kindergarten. This can result in a situation in which the kindergarten child is placed in a difficult situation because of immaturity and lack of skills."

One principal reported no problems, and the other reported that some of the children were located in a center too far away from the school.

The principals cited eleven examples of incidents in which transition was effective. Four of these involved meetings or events held by the school for Head Start parents.

Table 15

Problems Schools
Encountered in Transition

Problem	Problem Ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd		Problem Ranked First	
	N	%	N	%
Parents lack skills for dealing with elementary school personnel/ lack parenting skills/fear the schools	7	47	4	50
Children lack skills for dealing with elementary school personnel or environment	3	20		
There is no written agreement with Head Start	2	13	2	25
Information about individual children is absent or inadequate	2	13	1	13
Not enough time to meet with Head Start staff	1	7	1	12

"The fact that Head Start has helped parents deal with the school (has made transition more effective)."

"Parent involvement was poor in the past. We got a list of the parents from Head Start and contacted them by mail. We gave them information about school, sent out a form detailing the enrollment requirements. We gave them appointments for when to come in. When they came in we met with them personally, and explained the program."

"The transition coordinator has been very successful in getting a certain small circle of parents together for the meetings and hopefully it will grow each year as she does more outreach and parents feel more comfortable in coming into the school and getting involved."

"We held an informational night for Head Start parents, giving them information on the school, tests the children are going to take, and answered questions."

Two principals each described incidents in which communication was improved, records or information were sent to the school by Head Start, and activities were held by the school for the children to help them adjust to or learn about school. One described meetings between school staff and Head Start staff.

School Teachers

Nine elementary school teachers and one principal completed the school teacher's survey. All were white. Seven taught kindergarten and two taught first grade. Class sizes ranged from 17 to 67 (including both sessions of double sessions). Teachers had an average of 13.2 Head Start children in their classes.

School teachers' responses were compared with those of the principals in regard to their participation in transition activities. Cross-tabulations of responses from teachers and principals in the same school showed that responses were different on several categories. Teachers and principals generally agreed on participation in joint planning meetings with school staff, providing information to Head Start, meeting with Head Start staff and receiving the names of

Head Start children. However principals and teachers disagreed about 50% of the time on information and records received from Head Start with principals saying the information was received and teachers saying it was not received. Evidently principals receive the information in these cases, but it is not passed along to the teachers.

Teachers' uses of information provided were similar to those reported by the principals. Most frequently they were used to assist the child in class and to obtain services or evaluations for the child. Somewhat surprisingly only one teacher reported using the IEP in talks with parents. The IEP is supposed to be developed and used with parental involvement.

Teachers were asked about their discussions with parents during the first month of school. Almost all teachers said they had spoken with at least some parents on the topics of child's strengths, developmental level, need for screening, child's physical/mental/or emotional limitations and ways for parents to make their concerns known. However, less than half had spoken to all parents except about their child's strengths. Half of the ten teachers said they had spoken with all of the parents about child strengths during the first month of school.

Teachers were asked to compare the performance of the Head Start children in their classes to low-income children who did not attend Head Start. They were asked to judge the Head Start children's abilities in following directions, completing tasks, interacting appropriately with adults, interacting appropriately with other children, standing up for their rights and performing school work at the appropriate level.

Generally, teachers found Head Start children better prepared than their low-income peers.

Table 16

Teachers' Participation in Transitional Activities

Activity	Normally Do This N	Normally Do This %	Planning, Doing, or Have Done This N	Planning, Doing, or Have Done This %	Will Not Do This N	Will Not Do This %
Participated in joint planning with Head Start staff about transition procedures or transfer of records of individual children			8	80	2	20
Met with other school staff to discuss ways to facilitate the transition	1	10	4	40	5	50
Provided information to Head Start about your school (e.g., contact persons and phone numbers, registration procedures, school calendar)	2	20	6	60	2	20
Met with Head Start staff			8	80	2	20
Head Start provided teacher with:						
Information about the purpose of Head Start or its classroom methods, or ways that Head Start children were prepared for elementary school			6	60	3	33
Names of the Head Start children who would be entering elementary school	1	10	7	70	1	10

Table 17

Information Received from
Head Start Regarding Children

Type of Information	Normally Receive This		Planning to Receiving or Will Receive This		Will Not Receive This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Results of developmental screenings (such as the Denver Developmental Test)	2	22	4	44	3	33
Results of speech, vision or hearing tests	2	22	5	55	2	22
Results of developmental tests (such as the Caldwell Preschool Inventory or Learning Assessment Profile)	1	11	4	44	4	44
Social services records	1	11	4	44	4	44
Medical and/or dental records	2	22	4	44	3	33
Head Start teacher's reports on the child's strengths and weaknesses	1	11	5	55	3	33
(for handicapped children) Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives	2	22	2	22	5	55
(for handicapped children) Certification of the handicapping condition	2	22	3	33	4	44

Over the six categories of following directions, completing tasks; interacting appropriately with adults and with other children; standing up for their rights and performing school work at the appropriate level, 82% of the teachers rated the Head Start children equally or better prepared than their low income peers. Over the six categories 43% rated the Head Starters somewhat or much more prepared. More teachers rated Head Start children as performing equal to or better than other low income children on following directions and interacting appropriately with adults than on other skills. More teachers rated Head Start children as performing better than their peers on the skills of following directions (50%) standing up for their rights (50%) and performing work at the appropriate level (50%).

Teachers were also asked how former Head Start children adjusted to school during the first month of school compared to their low-income peers. Nine or 90% of the teachers rated the Head Starters as adjusting equally to or better than their peers.

It is important to note that the children to whom these teachers were referring were children who were in their current classes and except for a few were not the children who were in the transition project.

The teachers were asked to identify the biggest problems in the transition project. These are presented in Table 21.

As was seen with the Head Start directors and the principals, parental difficulties were cited most frequently as the major problem. Parents lack skills for dealing with the school or they work and do not have time to participate. The lack of a written agreement was seen as a problem to two teachers as was the lack of information about individual children, childrens' lack of skills for dealing with the school and the lack of trust between Head Start and

Table 18

Teachers'
Use of Information
Received From Head Start

	To place child in classroom group		To modify classroom activities		To assist child in class		To obtain services or evaluations for child		In talks with parent		Did/ will not use	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	#	%
Results of developmental screenings (such as the Denver Developmental Test)	2	12	2	12	6	35	4	24	3	18	-	-
Results of speech, vision, or hearing test	1	6	3	19	5	31	4	25	3	19	-	-
Results of developmental tests (such as the Caldwell Preschool or Learning Assessment Profile)	2	17	2	17	4	33	3	25	1	8	-	-
Medical and/or dental records	1	8	2	17	4	33	3	25	2	17	-	-
Social services records	1	13	1	13	2	25	2	25	1	13	1	13
Head Start teacher's reports on the child's strengths and weaknesses	2	25	2	25	4	50						
(for handicapped children) Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives	1	10	2	20	4	40	2	20	1	10	-	-
(for handicapped children) Certification of their handicapping condition			2	20	4	40	3	30	1	10	-	-

Table 19

Number of Parents With Whom Teachers Spoke About Various Topics During First Month of School

Topic	Number of Parents Spoken With							
	All (100%)		Most (50-99%)		Some (1-49%)		None	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Their child's strengths	5	50	2	20	3	30		
Their child's developmental level	2	20	3	30	4	40	1	10
Their child's needs for screening/ assessment/evaluation	2	20	1	10	5	50	2	20
Their child's physical/mental/ emotional limitations or special needs	3	30	2	20	4	40	1	10
Ways for parents to make their concerns about their child known to staff	3	33	1	11	4	44	1	11

Table 20

School Teachers'
Comparison of Head Start Children to
Other Low Income Children In a Variety of Abilities
(N = 10)

Children's Abilities	Head Start children were: Much Less Prepared		Somewhat Less Prepared		About Equally Prepared		Somewhat More Prepared		Much More Prepared	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Following directions					5	50	4	40	1	10
Completing tasks			3	30	3	30	3	30	1	10
Interacting appropriately with adults	1	10			6	60	1	10	2	20
Interacting appropriately with other children	1	10	1	10	4	40	2	20	2	20
Standing up for their rights	1	10	1	10	3	30	3	30	2	20
Performing school work at the appropriate level	2	20	1	10	2	20	3	30	2	20

Table 21

Teacher's Reports on Biggest Problems
In Transition

	Number of Teachers Identifying Problem	
	Problems Identified as 1st, 2nd or 3rd	Problem Identified as Biggest Problem
Parents lack skills for dealing with elementary school personnel or environment/do not have time to participate	4	3
There is no written agreement with Head Start	2	2
Information about individual children is absent or inadequate	2	1
Children lack skills for dealing with elementary school personnel or environment	2	
There is a lack of trust between Head Start and the school system	2	1
Head Start staff do not cooperate/ It is difficult to contact Head Start staff because of classes	2	1
Too many children are involved (in visits to school classes)	1	1
More information is needed on Head Start, what it is, what its schedules are	2	1

the school system. Similarly two teachers felt Head Start staff did not cooperate or it was difficult to contact them because they or the teachers were always in class. Two felt more information was needed on Head Start and one felt too many children were involved in visits to school classes.

Head Start Teachers

Nine Head Start teachers responded to the formative survey. Four of these had CDA degrees, five did not. Six were white, three were black. The teachers had an average of 25 children enrolled in their classes (including double sessions). An average of 21 children were to be attending elementary school in the fall of 1987. These children were to be distributed among an average of 4 schools. An average of 16 children per teacher were involved in the transition project, of whom an average of 2.4 were handicapped.

Almost all Head Start teachers reported that they participated in various activities to coordinate transition with the schools. These activities included joint planning with school staff, learning about the school curriculum and expectations of the children, and participating in visits to the schools. In addition the teachers reported that they provided the schools with information about the ways they prepared Head Start children for school, about their teaching methods and the names of the children who would be entering elementary school.

Teachers reported a variety of activities to prepare children for school. Most of these had been done because of the transition project although a sizeable proportion of the teachers reported that they normally did these things. All teachers took the children on field trips to the school they would attend, talked with the children about their fears of going to school, worked with

children on skills needed for early kindergarten work, and talked with children about how school will be different from Head Start. Most teachers had activities in which the children pretended they were in school and do things differently than they do in Head Start; showed pictures or videotapes of kindergarten to children, and had an elementary school teacher come to talk to the children about school. Only five of the nine said that they arranged for the children to meet children who will be their new classmates, noting that it was not always possible to know who these children would be or to arrange for meetings.

Head Start teachers were actively involved in transition efforts for parents. Almost all teachers reported that they (or the program) held parent workshops on differences between Head Start and the school and how to cope, developed and distributed a summer activities calendar, activities packet and book list. They talked with parents individually about what school would be like, about problems and successes their children might have, parents' rights in relation to transfer of Head Start records to the school and about parents' own feelings about their child starting school. Most teachers reported that arrangements were made for parents to visit the schools.

Teachers were almost equally divided on lists of concerns they had about the transition of their students to school. The items of greatest concern to them were that school staff would not encourage parents to become involved in school activities or decisionmaking groups, that school staff might not be able to work with Head Start parents in helping their children adjust to school and that the children might not be ready for the academic demands of school. These concerns were also reflected in the problems teachers saw with transition. The concern (of six teachers) was that parents lack skills for dealing

with the elementary school personnel or environment. Four teachers felt that too many schools were involved while two each noted that too many children were involved, there was no written agreement with the schools and there is little cooperation from the school board or staff.

Five or 56% of the Head Start teachers reported that they received guidance on using various activities to help children and parents make the transition to elementary school. (Four received no guidance.) Of those receiving guidance, only one said she received a lot of guidance. The others reported receiving "very little" or "some" guidance.

The teachers were asked about their projects' greatest successes. Their responses fell into three main categories - successes with parents, with children and with school personnel and policy makers.

Successes with parents included the following:

"We had nearly 40 out of 57 families attend a transition/registration meeting between Head Start and the elementary school."

"The feedback from the parents about the children going to the school."

"Parents are working in schools, maintaining an interest and familiarity with it."

"Head Start teachers act as a good resource person and support to parents who have questions or concerns about kindergarten."

"Helping parents of special needs children become aware of rights and where to get help for their children."

"The amount of information and support the parents have received from our transition facilitator. The comfort level of this year's parents compared to last year's parents is much higher. They feel that they are better prepared to advocate and challenge the public school system for their children as well as integrate into the system."

In regard to the children, there were also successes.

Table 22

Head Start Teachers'
Coordination Activities Between
Head Start and the Schools

Activity	Normally Do This		Progress: Planning, Doing or Have Done This		Will Not Do This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Participated in joint planning with school staff about transition procedures or transfer of records of individual children	1	11	6	66	2	22
Participated in activities to learn about the school curriculum and what is expected of Head Start children their first year in school	1	11	8	89		
Participated in visits to schools to see and learn about school facilities and programs	1	11	7	78	1	11
Information Provided to the Schools						
Information about the ways you have prepared children in your Head Start classes for school	1	11	7	78	1	11
Information about the teaching methods you use in your classroom			8	89	1	11
Names of the Head Start children in your class who will be entering elementary school	2	22	6	67	1	11

Table 23

Activities to Prepare Children
For School

Activity	Normally Do This		Planning, Doing or Have Done This		Will Not Do This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Take the children on field trips to the school they will attend	2	22	7	78		
Have an elementary school teacher come to talk to the children about school			7	78	2	22
Have activities in which the children pretend they are in school and do things differently than they do in Head Start (e.g., sit in rows, line up to go to lunch, work in workbooks)	1	11	7	28	1	11
Talk with the children about their fears of going to school	1	11	8	89		
Work with children on skills needed for early kindergarten work (e.g., number and letter recognition, colors, shapes)	5	63	3	37		
Talk with children about how school will be different from Head Start (e.g., fewer teachers, less flexibility in choice of activities, more "book work")	3	33	6	67		
Arrange for children to meet children who will be their new classmates	1	11	4	44	4	44
Show pictures or videotapes of kindergarten to children			7	78	2	22

Table 24

Activities For Parents to
Help Them Prepare Children
For School

Activity	Normally Do This		Planning, Doing or Have Done This		Will Not Do This	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hold parent workshops on how school will differ from Head Start and/or how to cope with the new school	1	11	7	77	1	11
Develop and distribute a summer calendar with activities for children to help prepare them for school	1	11	7	77	1	11
Develop and distribute a summer list of books for parents to read to children	2	22	6	67	1	11
Develop and distribute a summer activities packet (e.g., games, art, science activities, etc.) for the children	3	33	5	56	1	11
Talk with parents individually about what school will be like for them and their children	1	11	8	89		
Talk with parents individually about problems and successes their child may have in school	2	22	7	78		
Talk with parents about their rights in relation to transfer of Head Start records to the school	4	44	5	55		
Arrange for parent visits to the school			7	77	2	22
Involve parents when school teachers visit Head Start			6	66	3	33
Talk with parents about their own feelings about their child starting school	2	22	7	77		

Table 25

Teacher Concerns About
Child Transition To School
(N = 8)

Concern	Number/Percent Concerned			
	Concerned		Not Concerned	
	N	%	N	%
School staff might not be able to work with Head Start parents in helping their children adjust to school	4	50	4	50
School staff will not encourage parents to become involved in school activities or in decision-making groups	5	63	3	37
School teachers will not speak the primary language of the parents or children	1	13	7	87
The children might not be ready for the academically oriented demands in elementary school	4	50	4	50
Information on individual children provided by Head Start might not be used appropriately by elementary school staff	3	37	5	63
Head Start staff might have difficulties working with school staff	1	13	6	87

Table 26

Problems in Transition

	Problem Ranked 1st, 2nd or 3rd	Problem Ranked 1st
Parents lack skills for dealing with elementary school personnel or environment	6	1
Too many different elementary schools are involved	4	2
Too many children are involved	2	1
There is no written agreement with school district or school	2	1
There is little cooperation from school board or school staff (superintendent, principal or teachers)	2	2

"Having my class located in a public school site. Children are able to get a better role model of what regular kindergarten is like. Get a chance to interact with older children, able to participate in things like going to cafeteria, fire drills."

"I provide a variety of activities and experiences to Head Start children to prepare them emotionally, socially and intellectually for kindergarten."

"Working on the needs of children (e.g. hygiene)."

"What has helped most of us is having the opportunity to go visit the kindergarten."

"Children are excited about the kindergarten field trip. It's new for them, but a good learning experience. The kids get to know what is expected of them in the "big people's" school."

Success was also seen in improved relationships with the schools, as the following comments indicate.

"Better communication between Head Start and Public School Personnel."

"Forms developed by the two agencies to assist in transferring information from Head Start or any other Agency to the Public School."

"How public school teachers have responded positively to the setting up of Head Start field trips to kindergarten."

"Getting kindergarten teachers involved and opening doors and state policy makers - state school board - getting so many different people involved."

Head Start Parents

Parents of children currently in school but who had attended Head Start the previous year were sampled. The intent was to obtain a "pre-transition" measure on the parents and children which would be compared to the post-transition when the summative evaluation was done. In some cases where the transition project focused on first year school children, the children and parents were involved in the project.

Seventeen parents responded from a total of nine programs. Their children, who had attended Head Start, were currently five (8 children), six (8 children), or seven (one child) years old. They had attended Head Start an average of 1.6 years with the majority (9) having attended for one year.

Thirteen of the children had older siblings of which 12 had attended Head Start.

Parents were queried about Head Starts' efforts to ease their transition to school. They reported on the following efforts.

Eighty-one percent said someone from Head Start or someone from the child's school told them how elementary school would differ from Head Start. Fifty-nine percent said Head Start had a meeting or home visit to tell them about school, while 30 percent said there was no meeting and 12 percent did not know if there was a meeting.

Only seven parents reported attending a Head Start meeting or having a home visit about school. Fifty nine percent reported that the school had such a meeting. Nine or 53% of the parents attended the meeting.

Attendance at such meetings by barely one-half of the parents reflects the oft-stated concern of Head Start programs about the low participation rates in such events.

Parents reported that they and Head Start undertook a variety of other efforts to promote transition. Sixteen or 94% of the parents said they talked to the child about differences between Head Start and school. Fourteen or 82% reported receiving a medical/educational record consent form to sign. Nine reported that Head Start arranged for them to visit the school and seven went on the visit. Seven parents reported that Head Start had given them a list of books about school to read to their children and eight said that they read the books to the children (one said she did this on her own.)

Table 27

Activities
Head Start Programs Offered
Parents

	Number & Percentage of Parents Reporting Head Start Activity and/or Parent Participation	
	N	%
Parent talked to child about Head Start/school differences	16	94
Head Start gave parents medical/ education record consent form to sign	14	82
Head Start arranged for parents to visit school	9	53
Parent read books about school to child	8	47
Parents attended school visit	7	41
Head Start gave parents a list of books about school to read to child	7	41

Parents were generally quite positive about Head Start's efforts to promote transition. All parents felt ready to deal with the new school but only 71% said that having other children in school contributed to this readiness. Most (94%) felt Head Start taught them ways to help their child get along in elementary school. Most (76%) felt that Head Start told them most of what they needed to know about school, that the information was timely (76%) and that there was an adequate balance between written and verbal information.

Parents were asked about worries they might have had when the child started school. These were items that might arise because of differences between Head Start and the schools' methods, but also typical concerns any parent might have when a child enters school for the first time. With one exception the majority of parents did not have the questioned concerns (although a sizeable minority did.) The exception was in the child's ability to do the school work. In that case 53% of the parents surveyed stated that they were concerned. A smaller percentage (35%) were concerned about the child's behavior and that the teacher would not have enough time for the child. Only 24 percent were concerned that the new teacher would not understand the child and only 6% were worried that they would not be able to talk to the teacher.

Parents were also queried about behavioral problems the children may have experienced at school entry caused by the new environment. Almost no behavioral symptoms were uncovered. Parents noted essentially no change in behaviors of sleeping, eating, crying, bed wetting or having bad dreams. Only four parents reported the child wanting more attention than usual and only

Table 28

Parent Ratings of
Head Start Performance
on Transition

	Agreed		Disagreed	
	N	%	N	%
Head Start taught parent ways to help child get along in elementary school	16	94	1	6
The information about elementary school came from Head Start too late.	4	24	13	76
Head Start told parent most of what he/she needed to know about school	13	76	4	24
Head Start had too much written information and not enough talking	3	19	13	81
Parent felt ready to deal with the new school	17	100		
Parent felt especially ready because he/she had other children already in school	10	71	4	29

Table 29

Parental Concerns About
School Entry

	Concerned		Not Concerned	
	N	%	N	%
Worry that child would not be able to do the school work	9	53	8	47
Worry that child would not behave properly	6	35	11	65
Worry that teacher would not spend enough time with child	6	35	11	65
Worry that school teacher would not understand child's needs	4	24	13	77
Worry that parent would not be able to talk to the teacher easily	1	6	16	94

three children wanted to stay home from school more. Apparently all of these children adjusted fairly well to beginning school.

Parents were asked about transition activities that might have occurred once the child entered school. Here there was less activity, but again most of these parents were from Head Starts where the transition efforts focused on children in Head Start. Sixty-five percent or 11 parents reported that someone from Head Start had called or visited them to see how the child was doing in the new school; but only three reported that Head Start or the school had held a meeting just for Head Start parents since school began. Half of the parents (8) reported that Head Start had sent them a newsletter or handbook to help them with the child's school. Only three had received the name of another former Head Start parent they could call if they had problems or questions about school, and only four had received the name of some other person who could help them.

Eighty-eight percent reported that either Head Start or the school had told them about school activities in which they could be involved, but only five reported that Head Start had done other special things to help the parent and child adjust better to the school.

Parents reported that they had visited the school a median of five times a year. Two parents skewed the mean to 25 because they reported they visited every day since they worked as teacher aides. Parents talked to the teacher a median of 6 times with three parents talking to him/her every day. Attendance at PTA meetings was lower but a quite respectable mean of 4.75 and a median of 5. All but three parents reported that they had volunteered at the school, a median of seven times. Volunteer activities included serving as room mothers, classroom aides, assisting with field trips, taking refreshments for the class, and serving on committees.

Finally all but two parents knew the name of their child's teacher.

Even without transition activities aimed specifically at them, these data convey a picture of parents fairly actively involved in their children's school activities.

Parents were queried about their child's self-confidence, liking for Head Start and school and general happiness at three points in time - the previous spring in Head Start, the first month of school the previous fall, and at the time of the survey. The expectation was that the parents would have reported children highest on these measures in Head Start, dropping somewhat in the fall with school entry and increasing again over the year. It was hypothesized that once the transition project was underway the parents surveyed in the summative evaluation would report less of a drop in ratings in the fall.

On the five point self-confidence rating, 77% of the children were rated as pretty or extremely self-confident in the spring, dropping to 47% in the fall and increasing to 94% at the survey time (April/May). On liking of school, 88.2% of the children liked Head Start a lot in the spring, while 65% liked school a lot in the fall and 94% liked it a lot at survey time. However when the "liked a little" and "liked a lot" categories are combined, 94% of the children liked school in the fall. The primary movement on this scale came from the children who moved from liking school a little in the fall to liking it a lot in the spring.

One hundred percent of the children were considered fairly happy or very happy in the spring, dropping slightly to 94% in the fall and increasing again to 100% at survey time.

Thus the scores followed the predicted pattern, most notably on self-confidence and liking of school. A post-transition project measure will have to determine if transition activities decrease the fall score drop.

Table 30

Parents' Ratings of Child Self-Confidence, Liking of School and Happiness at Three Time Points

	Child Rating in Spring (1986) in Head Start		Child Rating in fall first month		Child Rating in spring 1987	
Self Confidence	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Very Self Confident			1	6		
Somewhat Self Confident	4	24	8	47	1	6
Pretty Self Confident	8	47	4	24	8	47
Extremely Self Confident	5	29	4	24	8	47
Liking School						
Doesn't Like or Dislike	2	12	1	6		
Likes a Little			5	29	1	6
Likes a Lot	15	88	11	65	16	94
Happy						
Not Happy or Sad			1	6		
Fairly Happy	4	24	8	47	5	29
Very Happy	13	76	8	47	12	71

Summary

Although the transition projects had different approaches, they had many similar concerns and activities designed to assuage these problems.

Programs repeatedly noted the real need for a transition effort. Many cited the striking discontinuity that exists between the Head Start and school approaches to early childhood education. While the Head Start programs are described as "informal, child directed, open ended learning center approaches", the schools to which these children progress are characterized as teacher-directed, formal, rigid and academic. For an individual child, moving from Head Start to school often means moving from an informal environment in which he learns through play to one in which he must follow prescribed procedures in which he is a passive recipient rather than an active participant.

Parents also are seen as suffering from the transition - going from a supportive environment in which they have an important integral role to an indifferent one in which they may have failed earlier as students themselves and in which they are expected to fend for themselves and their children.

In order to deal with this discontinuity, the transition grantees developed a variety of activities, agreements and approaches.

Planning and Cooperative Efforts with Schools

Almost all programs had engaged in joint planning with the school system and its staff, including developing common or compatible record forms. A majority had developed or were developing written agreements with the schools. However in some locations, it was felt that written agreements were not necessary due to the informal cooperation that existed. Even so several categories of respondents cited the lack of written agreements as a problem where they did not exist.

Most programs provided children's records to the schools, although not for all children. Over three-fourths provided medical records for all children and IEPs for all handicapped children. Social service records were not provided by a sizeable minority of programs that cited confidentiality concerns. **There was evidence from the principal and teacher questionnaires that the records frequently reached the principals but were not passed on to the teachers.**

The transition grant effort generally permeated the entire Head Start program with director, coordinators, and teachers involved in planning and activities.

Transition Activities

The Head Start programs undertook a number of similar activities to assist parents with transition. These included providing:

- information for parents on how to deal with the school their child would be entering
- opportunities for parents to be involved in the planning and implementation of the transition project
- training in assertiveness or advocacy for their children in the school system
- information on how to help their children practice skills needed for elementary school
- suggestions for summer activities
- helping parents understand their child's feelings and reactions to being in school

Programs used a variety of media to provide this information - written materials, discussions and audiovisual presentations.

Although meetings and school visits were arranged, most parents surveyed did not participate in them, although some did receive written materials and book lists.

It appears from this limited sample that many of the pre-transition project parents were not actively involved and there was room for improvement with transition project parents.

Directors and teachers were concerned that children would not be ready for the academic demands of school and that school staff would not encourage parents to be involved in school activities and in the education of their children.

Parents of the Head Start children were quite positive about Head Start's efforts even before the transition project began. However except for signing record transmittal consent forms, most had not received materials or participated in transitional activities, again reflecting the need for the special efforts.

The most popular activities for children included visits to the kindergarten, meeting a kindergarten teacher, talking with the children about ways elementary school would differ from Head Start, and participating in classroom activities designed to help them practice skills needed for school.

School personnel reiterated the concerns of the Head Start regarding transition. Many felt that both parents and children lacked the skills needed for dealing with the school.

Teacher Ratings of Children

Almost all teachers rating Head Start children against their low-income peers ranked Head Start children equal to or better than their peers on six

categories of skills. Ninety percent of the teachers rated them as adjusting equal to or better than their peers.

Conclusion

These projects demonstrate a number of successful approaches to transition and identified many barriers to transition as well. These successes and barriers are presented jointly with those of the random sample of Head Start programs in the Executive Summary and in Volume I of this report.

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